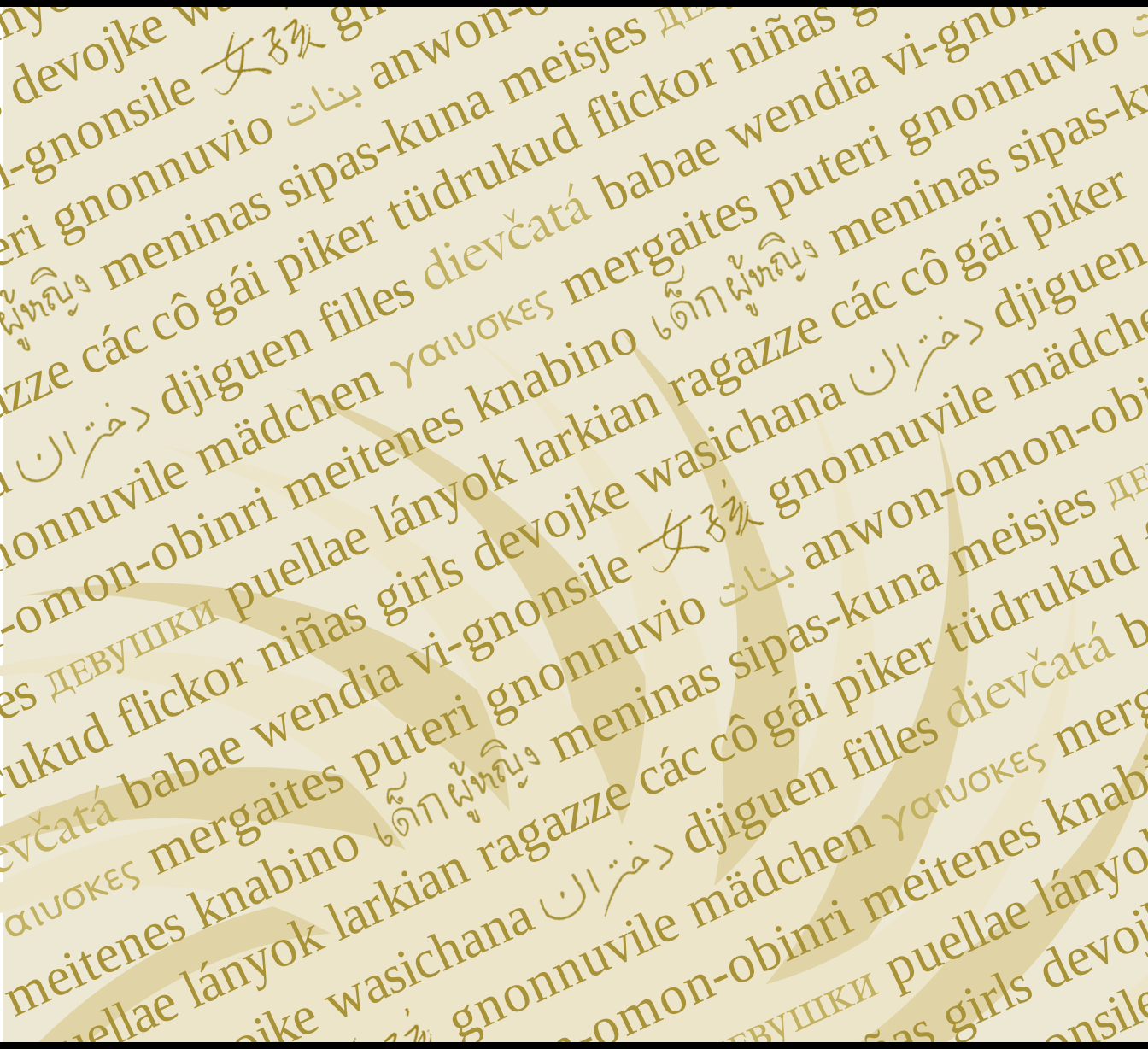
Proceedings

Forum on Girls' Education

Evidence
Issues
Actions



USAID

Forum on Girls' Education

Evidence
Issues
Actions

1 December 1999

U.S. Agency for International Development
Bureau for Global Programs, Field Support, and Research
Office of Women in Development
1300 Pennsylvania Ave., NW
Washington DC 20523-3801

девушки	Russian
puellae	Latin
lányok	Hungarian
larkian	Hindi/Urdu
ragazze	Italian
các cô gái	Vietnamese
piker	Norwegian
tüdrukud	Estonian
flickor	Swedish
niñas	Spanish
girls	English
devojke	Serbo-Croatian
wasichana	Swahili
دختران	Farsi
djiguen	Wolof
filles	French
dievčatá	Slovakian
babae	Tagalog
wendia	Dendi
vi-gnonsile	Goun
女孩	Chinese
gnonnuvile	Fon
mädchen	German
γαιυσκες	Greek
mergaites	Lithuanian
puteri	Indonesian
gnonnuvio	Mina
بنات	Arabic
anwon-omon-obinri	Yoruba
meitenes	Latvian
knabino	Esperanto
เด็กผู้หญิง	Thai
meninas	Portuguese
sipas-kuna	Quechua
meisjes	Dutch

Contents

The sessions

Emerging issues

Acknowledgments

Many people and organizations contributed to the success of the Forum on Girls' Education. The forum was sponsored by USAID's Office of Women in Development, under the guidance and vision of former director Margaret A. Lycette, deputy director Muneera Salem-Murdock, and education officer Susie Clay.

Planning for the event was undertaken by a planning committee that comprised the Academy for Educational Development (May Rihani, Karen Tietjen, and Howard Williams), the American Institutes for Research (Lorie Brush), Creative Associates International, Inc. (Janet Robb), DevTech Systems (John Hatch), Juárez and Associates (Ray Chesterfield), Management Systems International (Eileen Muirragui), and World Education (Shirley Burchfield).

In addition to participating on the planning committee, the Academy for Educational Development organized and implemented the forum as a subcontractor to Development Associates International.

Background

Research over the past twenty years has shown that female education is strongly linked to the social and economic well-being of developing nations. Based on these findings, USAID, other donors, and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) agreed at the 1990 World Conference on Education for All in Jomtien Thailand, to work to achieve universal primary school enrollment by 2000. Since then, research has been conducted, strategies proposed, interventions tested, and policies implemented, and school participation in many countries has improved significantly.

Female education is strongly linked to the social and economic wellbeing of developing nations.

These improvements have led some practitioners to believe that the problem of girls' education has essentially been solved and that they should move on to other areas of interest. However, despite the promise, Jomtien's goals are far from having been achieved, especially for girls. In fifty-one developing and developed countries, significant gaps persist in the proportion of girls and boys who are enrolled in primary school, and in some countries, the gap has actually widened. Worldwide, two-thirds of the children not in school are girls, and the gap between enrollment rates for boys and girls is projected to double by 2005. More than ever, governments and donors are challenged now to respond with effective actions to close the gender gap and ensure that all girls and boys attend and complete primary school.

In the effort to eradicate female illiteracy should the focus be on girls in formal education systems or adults in nonformal education programs?

The Current Dilemma

In the words of Margaret Lycette, former director of USAID's Office of Women in Development (G/WID), in order for development organizations "to be effective in an era of limited resources and tradeoffs," they are increasingly finding themselves engaging in difficult debates about how to use finite development funds. For example, in the effort to eradicate female illiteracy should the focus be on girls in formal education systems or adults in nonformal education programs? Some say that the priority should be girls, because as access to quality basic education becomes universal, illiteracy will eventually be eliminated. Others say that not only would such a policy ignore the millions of women who have already been left out of the formal education system, but that if resources were focused on such women, they would become the most effective advocates for universal (i.e., boys *and* girls) education.

Purpose of the December 1999 Forum

In an effort to keep the focus on this most important development issue, promote dialogue on divergent perspectives (such as that on girls' and women's education); suggest ways to address core issues and explore implications for program and policy improvements; increase interaction and develop new partnerships among various types of institutions, G/WID organized a forum in Washington DC in December, 1999, to which it invited more than fifty practitioners, researchers, consultants, and development officials. Participants from NGOs, development agencies, and other policymaking institutions discussed issues and experiences with girls' education. They brought forward new information and evidence and raised complex questions about the effectiveness of current approaches.

The forum's eight sessions were organized around such themes as *How can efforts to improve quality and access be balanced effectively? How does a focus on girls' education affect boys? How does private sector involvement in girls' education affect government support?* Sessions consisted of informal discussions that were begun with a summary of a short theme paper on a key issue or dilemma in girls' education. Papers, written by various experts in the field of girls' education, had been distributed before the forum, and facilitators kept the discussions moving along, writing down key points on flip charts. Rapporteurs took copious notes for use in preparing these proceedings.

Outcomes and Next Steps

To ensure that the outcome of the vigorous debates that occurred at the Forum was not limited to meeting, discussing, and "agreeing to disagree," USAID will use these proceedings to stimulate further discussion at a larger USAID symposium to be held in May 2000 in Washington DC. The proceedings will also provide the context for a series of papers and presentations on key issues and controversies in girls' education. These papers will rigorously seek the evidence to back up or call into question the effectiveness of the various policies, strategies, and implementation efforts of the past ten years in girls' education. According to Susie Clay of USAID's Office of Women in Development, and May Rihani, director of USAID's Strategies for Advancing Girls' Education, or SAGE project, "the papers and the May symposium will be less about 'individual accounts of our experiences,' and more about evidence, data, data analysis, and specifically about policy implications."

Organization of these Proceedings

What follows are eight synopses that capture the flavor of each of the discussions that occurred on December 1, 1999, in Washington DC. The topics are:

1. Increasing Girls' Educational Participation and Closing the Gender Gap: Basic Education or Girls' Education?
2. Partners, Adversaries, or Watchdogs: Defining the Relationship between Governments and NGOs in Implementing Girls' and Women's Education Programs
3. Girls' Education: Can We Effectively Balance Our Efforts to Improve Both Access and Quality?
4. Educating Girls or Educating Women: The Resource Investment Dilemma
5. Multi-Sectoral Support for Girls' Education: Help or Hindrance?
6. Creating Girl-Friendly Schools while Respecting Conventional Practices: Does Innovation Increase the Potential for Local Resistance?
7. Does Information Communication Technology Combat or Reinforce Inequities?
8. What Is the Role of Boys in Girls' Education?

We invite readers to send their comments on these proceedings as soon as possible, as they will be incorporated into the planning for the May 2000 symposium. Comments may be sent to mrihani@aed.org, or by fax to 202-884-8408.

1. Increasing Girls' Educational Participation and Closing the Gender Gap: Basic Education or Girls' Education?

There are two views: good schooling is girls' schooling, and girls' schooling is good schooling.

The context for the first discussion of the day was a snapshot of girls' educational status at the beginning of the year 2000, provided by Karen Tietjen (Academy for Educational Development). During the 1990s, girls' educational participation received unprecedented attention, yet boys still outnumber girls in primary and secondary school. In 1995, there were an estimated 85 million fewer girls than boys in primary and secondary schools in 132 countries, and two-thirds of the out-of-school children are girls. The good news is that girls' enrollment is rising steadily; since the 1980s, the enrollment gap has been cut by more than 50 percent, and from 1985 to 1995 enrollment rates for girls rose slightly faster than they did for boys. In 1998, 45 percent of all primary school students were girls. Even with these overall gains, in 58 of 97 developing countries surveyed in the late 1990s, girls' enrollment rates trailed those of boys, and the enrollment gap has actually increased in ten countries. Even in developing countries where there is equal intake, two-thirds of the children who leave school before completing the fourth year are girls. This gender gap is projected to double by 2005.[1]

Tietjen said that the debate over how donors should work to increase attainment and decrease the gender gap currently centers on whether *basic education reform* or *targeted girls' education* is the most effective mechanism. Proponents of basic education reform programs argue that such programs are fundamental to the overall health of the education system. Continued expansion and improvement of primary and secondary education, in general, will benefit all children, including girls. In short, good schooling is girls' schooling. Proponents of girls' education argue that basic education reform is not enough to overcome the differential barriers to girls' educational participation. Expansion and improvement must be tailored to fit girls' needs, and—in some instances—special programs should be developed specifically to address issues unique to girls. In short, girls' schooling is good schooling.

While one or two participants said they believed this was a false dichotomy or a "straw man" in the subsequent discussion, participants generally agreed with the state

[1]Sources: Naomi Neft and Ann Levine (1999), *Where Women Stand: An International Report on the Status of Women in 140 Countries, 1997–1998,* New York: Random House; Shanti Conly, ed. (1998), *Educating Girls: Gender Gaps and Gains—1998 Report on Progress Towards World Population Stabilization,* Washington, DC: Population Action International; Elizabeth King and M. Anne Hill (1993), *Women's Education in Developing Countries: Barriers, Benefits and Policies,* Baltimore and London: The World Bank and The Johns Hopkins University Press.

of the debate as laid out by Tietjen, and spent most of the hour discussing the degree of emphasis on girls' participation, vis-à-vis basic education and quality issues for donors and education ministries. Some argued for an increased focus on girls and for more research to learn which interventions are most effective; others urged greater efforts to explain the benefits of educating girls to ministries and parents; some participants emphasized the need to allocate scarce resources more effectively.

All participants appeared to agree, however, that even when the primary emphasis is on reforming the entire education system, interventions will be needed that specifically focus on girls, not only in education ministries, but at the classroom level as well. For example, May Rihani said that while the need to focus on girls is not always evident from the start of a reform, as in several of the Middle Eastern countries where she has worked, universal education cannot be achieved without such a focus. "Even if initially most reforms were not aimed at girls, the more systems worked to achieve education for all, the more they have realized that they have to focus on girls."

Barbara Herz (U.S. Department of Treasury) commented on the degree to which a focus on girls in an education reform has policy ramifications. She noted that policy dialogue with ministries has often emphasized basic education with a few activities aimed at girls added. Yet, even parents who are "on the fence" about educating their own girls will support basic education reforms enthusiastically, and girls do ultimately benefit from them. Herz cited the example of World Bank's Balochistan project which had its roots in an earlier AID project. This program sought to lower both the direct and cultural barriers to educating girls. Such "system reforms" as giving communities control over local schools by allowing them to choose their own teachers contributed to the dramatic rise in girls' enrollments. "Investments in girls' education are among the highest return investments available in developing countries today when you consider the economic and social benefits," she continues. "The difficulty is that these benefits accrue to the girls when they grow up and to their own families and societies, not to the parents who must incur substantial costs now. This is a classic case for more public finance and we know 'what works.' Parents will respond and send their girls to school if the school is close to home, if it offers quality education, and if it is culturally sensitive—in short, if it seems worth the effort. But the public sector must help with the costs." Robin Horn (World Bank) suggested that basic education reform, by definition, should refer to making schools effective, which includes sets of interventions focusing on the factors that directly inhibit girls from enrolling, such as high economic and opportunity costs.

Wary of approaching the problem indirectly, Frank Method (UNESCO) suggested that "we force a commitment to universal education—we shouldn't be shy about challenging the status quo and changing the world." The difficulty of this take-no-prisoners approach, according to Mona Grieser (Global Vision), is that policymakers worried about reelection need interventions in education systems to show economic returns and may not be open to such radical change. "Politicians are reelected not because girls are better educated, but because progress has been made toward universal education."

On the question of the degree to which education systems should focus on girls, Margaret Lycette said that no funding agency *deliberately* excludes girls' education from its agenda, but the issue is how girls' education fits within the larger context of basic education reforms. Susie Clay added that some critics, especially in Asia and the Middle East, have said that a focus on girls disadvantages boys, while in truth boys benefit equally, if not more, by such an emphasis.[2] Citing a USAID project in Morocco where the disparity between girls and boys in rural areas was extreme, Eileen Muirragui (Management Systems International) said that a lack of emphasis on girls creates the risk that no education at all will be available to them.

Sharon Franz (Academy for Educational Development) shared the experience of the United States in the 1950s to 1970s, where the notion of "separate but equal" gave way to the idea of "mainstreaming" people. While there indeed were dramatic events that led to some changes, such as court decisions and protest marches, there were more subtle, specifically targeted interventions, many fostered by the women's movement, that focused on teacher behavior, language, and curriculum. The approach was systemic rather than focused just on girls through a series of isolated interventions.

Bettina Moll (World Bank) said that her focus on girls' education in sub-Saharan Africa has helped her understand that when classrooms improve for girls, everyone benefits. Herz agreed, saying that interventions must address educational quality, getting girls into schools, and target policymakers (who will have to manage educational resources) and parents (who must support and help govern their children's schools).

Several participants cited the need for research into how to influence key policymakers and to choose which interventions have the greatest likelihood of success. Deborah Llewellyn (Creative Associates International) said that lessons learned from girls' education have potential applicability to achieving universal basic education, but proponents have not been tactically effective in engaging key actors. She suggested "keying in on the processes of educating" and using girls' education as a driving force and a lens to see how the broader goals might be achieved. Mary Joy Pigozzi (UNICEF) suggested that donors and policymakers "look at the pieces and ask if they are really reforms, affirmative action for girls, or affirmative action for all excluded groups."

A factor inhibiting increased girls' educational participation is hostility or indifference to the issue on the part of ministries and communities. Most ministries of education are not opposed to discussing girls' education, according to Karin Hyde (Latilewa Consulting, Kenya). "At some level, they recognize that girls' education leads to economic opportunities for women, better health, and lower population growth rates, but they do not always see these as good things." If this underlying reluctance to promote girls' education is not addressed, then a focus on planning implementation of new policies is premature. Hyde called for a higher level of analysis on the ground, by

[2]For a discussion of this issue, see "Girls' Education: Good for Boys, Good for Development," *Information Bulletin No. 5, October 1999.* Washington, DC: USAID/Office of Women in Development. Available at www.genderreach.com/pdfs/Pubs/genderr-ib5.pdf.

both donors and education ministries, to determine why various strategies have not had the desired effect.

A lack of emphasis on girls creates the risk that no education at all will be available to them.

Lycette seconded the idea that people do not always demonstrate that they are convinced of the benefits of girls' education. Complicating the matter is that reduced resource levels have forced agencies to prove that there is a benefit by focusing on just the one or two things that they know will work. Lycette wondered if it might have been a mistake to "disaggregate" girls from the goal of universal education instead of seeking further explanations for why the larger goal has not been achieved. Emily Vargas-Baron (USAID) characterized another of the drawbacks of donors' narrow focus on enrollments: she wondered how quality will be assured once enrollment rates improve, as donors' intense focus on attaining numerical results has worsened some already ghastly classroom conditions in many places.

Don Foster-Gross (USAID) reminded participants that education for all is not just about primary school, but about the whole learning spectrum—its effects on girls and the nation—including mothers, girls taking care of siblings, girls out of school, and girls out of work.

Tietjen worried that the debate was centering on the donor community's role, and asked about the points of view of governments. Recalling Lycette's comment that there often is a difference between what governments say and do, Tietjen wondered where the money would come from for effective programs. Diane Prouty (American Institutes for Research) answered that it is not always a question of whether, but of how to educate girls in a way the country can afford.

In closing the session, Clay mentioned that at a recent Education for All forum held in Paris, a proposal was made to exclude the goal of achieving gender parity throughout the world by 2015, because of a general perception that the problem had been solved. A second confounding issue brought forward is that forty-seven nations are currently in crisis, leading to massive movements of refugees, enormous trauma, child labor, and trafficking of girls and new approaches are needed to address these dire situations as well.

2. Partners, Adversaries, or Watchdogs: Defining the Relationship between Governments and NGOs in Implementing Girls' and Women's Education Programs

NGOs increasingly complement both government and business in the provision of social services, including basic and girls' education, according to Howard Williams (Academy for Educational Development), who set the context for the discussion. NGOs are uniquely able to create partnerships with communities and often offer more appropriate local programs, especially for underserved populations, than those delivered through government. NGOs do not simply deliver services, however, but *determine their actions in partnership with beneficiary individuals and communities.* The abilities to engage in participatory relationships with beneficiaries and to identify with community needs are among the distinguishing features of NGOs.

In recognition of these strengths, donors have entrusted NGOs with increasingly larger percentages of their resources. On the other hand, NGOs have also inherited new service delivery expectations and accountability requirements from the funding organizations. NGOs' traditionally complementary role to government is now often seen as an alternate or even a substitute for services and programs traditionally provided by government, raising questions about the relative effectiveness of NGOs and governments in providing services. In the education field, such questions include how to provide high-quality and sustainable educational services to marginalized populations such as girls and women. In particular:

- What do NGOs and governments do well (and not well)?
- How do NGOs' political agendas affect the provision of services for girls' education?
- To what extent can (and should) government affect the equitable distribution of NGO program coverage across populations?
- What are the strengths and weaknesses of NGOs and governments in reaching out to nontraditional partners such as the media and business and religious leaders?
- What are the sustainability issues implied by NGO and government programs?
- How can complementary rather than antagonistic roles for NGOs vis-à-vis government be facilitated?

Participants first addressed the last question and agreed on the need for NGOs to work more as partners, rather than as adversaries, of government. At the same time, NGOs should continue to play a necessary role in encouraging governments to improve policies. Gabriela Núñez (independent consultant) recently completed an assessment of all government programs aimed at girls' education in Guatemala. Núñez believes that NGOs can help coordinate these many activities as well as capture lessons from these experiences. Khadija Ramram (USAID/Morocco) said that in Morocco, the nature of NGOs has changed over the years. In the 1970s, NGOs were mainly

advocacy organizations, often in conflict with government, but beginning in the 1980s and continuing into the 1990s, this changed as NGOs became empowered to run education programs themselves.

Peg Sutton (Indiana University) provided a "taxonomy of NGOs," which included religious and contractual organizations. She said that some NGOs may be considered "rogue" organizations, citing women's action organizations that, at the Beijing women's conference, discussed dilemmas in service delivery but were unable to advocate policies that differed from government's, as they relied on government funding.

The discussion then turned to questions of how NGOs are structured, and how women fit into these organizations. For example, Jane Benbow (CARE) asked if NGOs—which fear government infringement on their freedom—act as contractors for donor agencies and whether this in a sense makes them more "like" donors? Karin Hyde (Latilewa Consulting) provided an example from FAWE (Forum for African Women Educationalists), saying that it struggles to keep itself from acting like a contracting agency, because the organization wants to maintain its independence and not "have its agenda bent to the will of donors." FAWE has been able to maintain its identity by adhering to its original goals and vision, meeting often, and diversifying its funding. For example, FAWE "had the luxury of Ford Foundation funding, which allowed it to make mistakes as well as to maintain its own agenda." Chloe O'Gara (AED) asked whether larger NGOs were focusing on girls' education as much as women in development and whether women's organizations without women in leadership roles were exploitative? She also wondered whether donors' insistence that NGOs be "gender friendly" is not a form of cultural imperialism. Others said that the important factor was that the initiatives for new programs or policies be local and the important question for donors is how to support and not kill such initiative.

The abilities to engage in participatory relationships with beneficiaries and to identify with community needs are among the distinguishing features of NGOs.

Turning to what the limits on NGOs might be, participants appeared to agree that NGOs should not be considered substitutes for government, which should retain primary responsibility for educating all of its citizens. Some participants worried that large basic education programs such as Bangladesh's BRAC (Bangladesh Rural Advancement Committee) program relieve the state of too many of its obligations. Yet, BRAC provides services that the government is not, and in this sense is not competing with the government. The tradeoff is whether to demand a service that government might not be able or willing to afford, or going without. It is also possible that the strategy of using an NGO such as BRAC to deliver educational services to girls could

add pressure for government to accept its responsibility, or at least explain why it cannot provide comparable services. For example, BRAC appears to be producing greater student achievement at a lower cost than government schools. Would the government not rather engage BRAC as a partner than as a competitor or a threat? And to what extent will governments be willing to give NGOs a policy role?

Another role better left to government, according to participants, was the job of creating coherent educational policy and setting achievement standards. NGOs, however, could contribute to policy formation both formally and informally. NGOs could also form alliances to coordinate their efforts and benefit from each other's experience. Howard Williams proposed a chart mapping out the appropriate areas of action for government and NGOs.

Education reform: appropriate areas of action for government and NGOs

	Government	NGO	Coalition
Policy	y		m
Standards	y	m	m
Curricula and texts	y	m	m
Delivery (to scale)	y	y	m
Advocacy		y	m
Mobilization		y	m

**y = yes; m = maybe*

The session continued with a discussion of NGOs' role in encouraging decentralization. One commentator said that decentralization is not the same as liberalization. For example, some regional or local education offices could be more traditional and conservative than the central government and serve to limit change. Or, in a perverse example, Morocco's decentralization took place in a highly centralized fashion, though with the country's recent democratization, the policy is now beginning to address local needs better.

The session closed with a discussion of what might prove to be productive topics for the symposium. Suggestions included a presentation of models and typologies, such as those discussed in the sessions, all of which would be tied to concrete cases, with an emphasis on funding mechanisms and the provision of services to women and girls. Others suggested a discussion of how NGO coalitions function to meet their own needs and then the needs of the larger entity. There was a suggestion for a discussion of the danger that NGOs in developing countries are proliferating as a function of the level of external funding, which raises sustainability issues. Finally, there was a call for field research to determine what new opportunities have developed for women who have benefited from NGOs' innovative programs, as well as to learn what features of the basic education process led to behavior changes in girls.

3. Girls' Education: Can We Effectively Balance Our Efforts to Improve Both Access and Quality?

Despite two decades of expansion and improvement of basic education systems worldwide, girls still face the essential challenges of gaining access and obtaining a quality education. Some educational specialists argue that the next generation of educational programs should focus on fundamental quality issues to ensure a continued increase in access along with an improvement in quality. Another group believes the focus should remain on the gender gap that persists in many developing countries. This group does not oppose investment in educational programs that focus on quality, but is convinced that it is both more urgent and a wiser use of resources to help the twenty to forty percent of girls who are not in school to gain access to basic education.

In the discussion, participants first worked to define *access*, *quality*, and *quality girls' education*, and then looked at linkages among the three. While one definition of *access* could be "a school building within a reasonable distance from home," most participants accepted the idea that minimum requirements for a school to be considered accessible included at least some facets of quality in addition to a building, such as a trained teacher and a basic set of materials.

Though the group agreed that *who* defines quality is important (communities?, education ministries?, outsiders like donors?), they nevertheless began the dialogue by defining *quality* as sets of inputs and outputs. For example, quality inputs could mean teachers trained to a certain level and textbooks for all students that are relevant and up-to-date. An example of a quality output could be sufficient mastery of subject matter and high completion rates. Several ideas were considered as definitions of *quality girls' education*, grouped as structural inputs (e.g., latrines, female teachers, and safety), in-class inputs (a "rights-based" approach, no stereotyping, and a voice in decision making and learning), and outputs (girls' and boys' success in learning). The sense of the group was that access and quality must be linked to make girls' education successful.

Most participants agreed that access and quality are interrelated, and most, especially parents, would agree that access means more than the availability of places. Jane Benbow (CARE) said that access and quality are inseparable, because learning—not simply being present in a school building—is the goal. Another participant believes that "access should refer to the availability of an educational opportunity that is both attractive and interesting." The corollary is that if the quality is lacking, access can become irrelevant. For example, in some public schools, parents have removed their children when they did not approve of the curriculum; and

Access should refer to the availability of an educational opportunity that is both attractive and interesting.

in Mali, more children go to the *madrasa* (Koranic schools) than to public schools because of parental concerns about curricula and quality. Andrea Rugh (independent consultant) said that most communities have specific basic ideas about what quality education should include, but questioned whether any country is formally measuring learning outcomes or assessing system effectiveness.

Peg Sutton said that access and quality are both dependent on teachers, but the international development community has given only sporadic attention to the teaching force. Though it may be expensive to hire and maintain a skilled teaching force, this is ultimately where quality rests. Bettina Moll seconded the idea that teachers are the keys to learning achievement. "A quality school effectively teaches the child a curriculum without repetition," Moll said. A focus on teacher development will lead to improved focus on girls' education and teachers' classroom practice. For example, trained teachers are more likely to show up to class with, and know how to use, textbooks. In other words, access is highly related to quality.

Without disputing the point that access is related to quality, May Rihani noted that in some rural areas there are no schools, and so in some sense access and quality are separate issues, that is, without a school there is no education at all, much less quality education. Don Sillers (USAID) agreed that it is useful to "think of access in physical terms—as an available place in a school reasonably close to a child's home. Defining access this way, allows us to disentangle problems of physical access from problems of inadequate quality and to think more clearly about solutions to each kind of problem."

Access and quality are also a function of resources, according to two speakers. Bob Prouty (World Bank) thought it scandalous that universal access has not been achieved. "It is not an insolvable problem, nor would new technology be required." Prouty said that the significant progress that has been made is "limited only by our own energies and vision." He pointed out that in Guinea, girls' enrollment doubled to forty percent of girls in school after policies were changed. And in Senegal, more than two thousand new teachers were hired and per teacher costs decreased significantly. At the current pace of progress, there will soon be sufficient capacity for all Senegalese children to attend school. However, universal access cannot be achieved overnight, as the example of Uganda makes painfully clear. Another participant observed that when universal primary education policies are suddenly announced by governments, enormous stress on school systems results. "The doors opened and the kids come flooding in." When Uganda announced its universal primary education policy in 1996, pupils, teachers, and parents identified some of the resulting quality issues as access, teacher attendance, and children's ability to complete their schoolwork.

In ending the discussion on access, Diane Prouty suggested "thinking about changing the entire education system rather than changing the girl." Continuous improvements in the system, she said, will put the focus on access and quality. Robin Horn said that more attention is needed in order to increase school places while providing opportunities for learning to take place. "It might take several decades to realize a student-centered vision of quality schooling for all children…and success will de-

pend on effective planning and the full participation of communities in the quality and access debate." Finally Sue Grant Lewis (Harvard University) cautioned that community participation should not be viewed as a vehicle to "move the burden off of government and onto communities."

Community participation should not be viewed as a vehicle to "move the burden off of government and onto communities.

Another participant suggested that quality issues should not always be viewed in the context of how girls need to catch up to boys. Indeed, in the United States, some test scores show that by late elementary school girls exceed boys in reading and writing.

Susie Clay tried to move the discussion to focus more on quality with the observation that school quality issues for girls and boys are different. "In the talk about gender sensitivity and girl-friendly classrooms, one can forget that much goes on outside the classroom within families and communities." Mary Joy Pigozzi agreed, citing the shift to the view that every child has the right to an education. From this point of view, she said, quality includes "academic effectiveness, a respect for differences among people, and the provision of a safe protective environment in which to learn." Pigozzi urged participants to "consider the quality of the child that comes into the system." They should not be hungry or sick, nor have just worked four hours before coming to school, all of which severely affect learning ability. Another speaker added that there are only a few things that most families mean by the term *quality*: safety, privacy, and the suitability of the teachers.

Another speaker said, "we should encourage quality but avoid an inequitable distribution of resources, making some schools wonderful while others languish," and cited the example of countries that focus on educating urban children and boys.

Josh Muskin (World Learning) said that the challenge of achieving quality will be different for different environments. "Quality requirements are as varied as the expectations of what schools can do—there is no one model of quality." Diane Prouty disagreed, noting that there is almost universal basic agreement that all children should learn to read and enumerate. It is only beyond that where differences arise, e.g., outcomes such as job opportunities and higher education. Prouty suggested that the international development community should focus on outcomes that all children should attain.

4. Educating Girls or Educating Women: The Resource Investment Dilemma

In 1991, 77 million girls aged 6–11, compared to 52 million boys, were out of school worldwide.[3] Between 1970 and 1985, the number of women unable to read rose by 54 million (to 597 million) while that of men increased by only 4 million (to 352 million). The illiteracy rate grew more than thirteen times faster for women.[4]

Research demonstrates not only the *need* to increase educational opportunities for girls and women but that there are tremendous social and economic *benefits* from doing so. Educated girls and women have fewer and healthier children, have more economically secure families, and are more likely to ensure that their own children enroll and stay in school. Furthermore, the benefits of educating girls and women are sus-tainable, because in most cultures women have the greatest formative influence on children.

While few would argue against girls' education, opinions differ as to whether resources should be focused solely on educating girls or whether programs should also serve the educational needs of women. Some argue that the impact of investing in girls is likely to be greater than investing in women, since young girls have not yet married or had children, have greater opportunities for completing their education, and have a wider range of choices about their future. Advocates of this position contend that only after universal access to primary education has been achieved should precious resources be expended on the education of women, whose attitudes may already be formed and whose patterns of behavior may already be too well established to change.

Others assert that a strategy focusing only on girls' education is insufficient and that an integrated approach addressing the educational needs of both girls and women is required if disparities are to be eliminated and the cycle of poverty in which women find themselves is to be broken. Additionally, some experts contend that programs aimed at increasing the educational status of women often directly benefit girls because many of the participants in adult education programs are out-of-school adolescent girls who have been unable to continue their formal education. Such programs allow these adolescent participants to reenter the formal education system.

The discussion that followed reviewed the evidence, debated the merits of these varying perceptions, and called for further research into the costs and benefits of girls' and women's basic education and literacy programs.

The conversation started with the comment that in an ideal world, resources would be available for everyone; however, in the real world of scarce resources, choices are necessary. Emily Vargas-Baron pointed out that the U.S. Congress provides funds for basic education for *children*, not for non-children. The underlying assumption of this funding pattern is that if all young girls are educated, the next generation will take care of itself. But this does not happen, Vargas-Baron said. For example, South Asia,

[3]World Bank, *Priorities and Strategies for Education*, Washington DC, 1995.

[4]UNDIESA, *The World's Women: Trends and Statistics 1970–1990,* New York, 1991.

with high girls' enrollment rates, also has among the highest rates of illiteracy. Don Foster-Gross explained that congressional limitations on funding that mandate investment in girls' education contributes to the problem. Vargas-Baron and Foster-Gross suggested that to increase funding for women's education, the international development community will have to develop arguments, backed up with research evidence, that educating women both complements and benefits the task of educating girls. Another tactic, offered by Shirley Burchfield (World Education), is to fold activities for women into an "integrated" program that falls under another mission strategic objective, such as health.

While few argue against girls' education, opinions differ as to whether resources should be focused solely on educating girls or whether programs should also serve the educational needs of women.

Many participants appeared to believe that the benefits of women's literacy programs have already been clearly demonstrated. One speaker said that literacy classes capture both daughters who drop out and their mothers, and that such classes provide a way for girls to return to school. Jill McFarren (Save the Children) said that in Guatemala, literacy programs incorporate information and skills related to children and health. Christina Rawley (USAID) said that the Women's Empowerment Project in Nepal demonstrated a correlation between literacy training and democracy advocacy in newly literate village associations. In the United States, Foster-Gross reported working with parents in a preschool more than twenty years ago, where he observed that when women gained education, their self-esteem improved, and many returned to the schools to help their own children succeed. Khadija Ramram (Save the Children) said that in rural Morocco, due to women's education and literacy programs, there is evidence that the more educated a woman is, the more she is willing to make the necessary sacrifices to keep her girls in school.

Vargas-Baron said that the benefits go beyond increasing skills and promoting girls' education. Women's education reduces youth violence, the selling of children into forced labor or prostitution, and helps prevent civil strife. These benefits, and "a whole cluster of outcomes and effects across generations are difficult to measure, and so are not seen as valid" in USAID's system of indicators, she said.

If the benefits are clear, then perhaps the issue is that their benefits *relative to girl's education* are not. An additional complication is that women's literacy programs have a reputation for being cost inefficient. Karen Tietjen said that USAID basic education programs made measurable progress serving girls. However, literacy is a less manageable problem, because literacy programs are not usually institutionalized within government structures, and thus have not been seen as viable alternatives, from the funding standpoint, to girls' education.

McFarren said that research into cost effectiveness often wrongly assumes that all programs operate in the same context. Furthermore, according to Burchfield, cost effectiveness studies do not capture "the interactive effect that occurs when parents see the benefits of girls' education." Cutting to the heart of the cost effectiveness debate, Tietjen said the question should be whether women's literacy programs offered the best strategy to get girls into basic education. That is, if a small portion of money is diverted to women's education, would it lead to slower gains in girls' participation? What is known about women's education as a strategy to get girls into school? Referring to recent cost studies on literacy programs in Nepal, which compared the costs of programs for six-year-old girls and for women, Tietjen wondered if the costs of getting women to a particular literacy level could be compared with the costs required for girls to complete a basic education program. A comparison could also examine the effect higher women's literacy rates have on the time it takes girls to complete the primary cycle. Finally, Tietjen said the costs of literacy courses should be determined.

Lynn Ilon (State University of New York/Buffalo) refined some of these research needs even further. "We should draw a box around the issue 'How women's literacy impacts girls' education.' What if we found that women's literacy programs are 5 to 10 percent more expensive than those for girls? Could this be made up for by the ancillary effects of educating women?" Ilon suggested a narrow study of 1 or 2 programs to try to capture the benefits, and another study to measure productivity gains. (Ilon cautioned, however, that other gains might be harder to measure. For example, how could personal gains, such as being able to go to market and choose the right foods, and thus improve the family's nutrition, be measured?)

Another suggested avenue of research was to determine the effects of teaching literacy and basic education classes in local and national languages. Do literacy classes taught in local languages allow daughters to reap the same benefits of having an "educated mother"? Are the social and economic benefits different for women who are literate in a local versus a national language? Furthermore, are the positive effects of local-language instruction being undermined by the use indicators such as literacy rates which—because they are measured by literacy in the national language—may not improve once women have become literate in a local language?

Some data may already be available that could begin to answer some of these questions, according to Vargas-Baron. For example, there is a new demographic and health survey (DHS) that includes education variables. The data, accessible online, could be analyzed to compare mothers' and children's attainment. Of course, the data may provide only rough indications: the questions may need refining, people do not always answer accurately, and some data simply cannot capture the whole truth. Some program effects might be difficult to measure with a DHS-type instrument, according to Tietjen, because literacy programs are not all alike. Burchfield illustrated this point, noting that some programs focus on health, while others stress economic activities and income generation. Then there are differences among other variables, such as pedagogical approaches.

5. Multi-Sectoral Support for Girls' Education: Help or Hindrance?

Until recently, governments were viewed as solely responsible for the financing and provision of education services, and donors and NGOs interacted primarily with governments. There is a growing recognition of the vast resources and influence of the media, religion, and business on the values and practices of people in developing countries. Due to this recognition, there is now increasing acceptance that these sectors might play important roles, both in providing complementary resources and in influencing public opinion in support of girls' education.

Involving the private sector in girls' education opens up the possibility of accessing significant resources not currently available to the government. The private sector can act quickly to provide infrastructure improvements, scholarships, school supplies, and supplementary educational materials. On the other hand, there is concern that the private sector—more intent on its bottom line than on providing equitable services to children—can usurp the role of the government and support its own agenda. Involving the media and using its expertise, networks, and resources to advocate for girls' education can provide immediate access and influence at all levels of society through such activities as social mobilization campaigns and radio service spots. On the other hand, the media can be controlled by the government, corporations or other entities, which might result in biased reporting on education issues. Religious leaders are clearly some of the most powerful influences on cultural norms and expectations for girls' educational participation, and they can be enlisted to support girls' participation as well as to promote education policies, programs and needed services such as school lunch or child-care programs. However, involving the religious leadership may provide them with a forum for promoting religious issues that are not supportive of girls' education, and create divisions based on religion within the education community.

The discussion began with the question of whether nontraditional involvement in girls' education is a help or hindrance. Gabriela Núñez said that in Guatemala, the private sector plays an important role in developing a constituency for girls' education. They provide resources, and help the education ministry manage resources effectively. Because of assistance from the private sector in managing girls' scholarships, the ministry has been able to apply the savings to additional scholarships. Núñez said that social and political conditions have to be right for such partnerships to succeed. Eileen Muirragui said that in Morocco, it was not as much a question of help

Involving the private sector in girls' education opens up the possibility of accessing significant resources not currently available to the government.

Should there be any limits on private sector support? For example, what if, in exchange for its expertise, Coca-Cola asked to set up franchises in schools.

or hindrance as of how to make partnerships work. In that country, a federation of sixteen banks and fifteen hundred enterprises are in a partnership with the Ministry of Education to support six hundred schools. But the question is how to take advantage of the enthusiasm while infusing it with realism.

The private sector also has expertise in putting together and running large partnership systems, according to Andrea Rugh, and lessons could be learned from them about running education systems more efficiently and more cost effectively. These might include such techniques as outsourcing, developing service organizations, running seamless and transparent operations, and breaking the whole down into manageable pieces.

Karen Tietjen asked to what extent participants thought governments would be willing to be involved with the private sector. Going back to the example of Morocco, Frank Method said that donors have not been willing to supply the needed assistance that countries have in developing partnerships. China, Method said, also cannot keep pace with the demand for education and is considering whether private schools and universities could respond to some of the demand. The donors, especially the United States, could be very helpful in helping countries design teacher development programs and develop accreditation standards, two areas of particular weakness in developing countries.

Noting that the private sector has long supported private schools, Susie Clay wondered whether the private sector could also support public schools by building schools or latrines, or purchasing books and uniforms. There is more willingness to accept this type of assistance than one might think, Method answered. But private sector support does not necessarily mean private sector *funding,* he said. The support could consist of mobilizing a wide range of organizations committed to public education and public funding. One example of such mobilization occurred in Mali, said Fred Wood (Save the Children), where the government was "shamed into jumping on board," leading to the founding of eight hundred new schools in cooperation with the private sector.

Khadija Ramram said that when the public sector is the only institution in charge of social services, programs tend to be both unsustainable and of poor quality. She repeated that the issue is how to share implementation among NGOs, the private sector, and the public sector. In her view, to ensure quality and sustainability, each partner must understand the key issues as well as how the other partners operate.

Clay asked if there should be any limits on private sector support. For example, what if, in exchange for its expertise, Coca-Cola asked to set up franchises in schools. This very type of thing happened in Guatemala, said Núñez, where the ministry of education at first welcomed the Coca-Cola Foundation, but is now questioning the relationship as it aids Coca-Cola in penetrating rural markets. The ministry is now

considering establishing guidelines and specifying private sector roles. Tietjen questioned whether the private sector is capable of adopting a public welfare agenda at all. Mona Grieser said that the governments in Japan, Taiwan, and Turkey appealed to the private sector to help support the countries' industrial development. Method suggested that the group learn to distinguish between companies with commercial motivations and other moneymaking entities that allocate funding for social purposes.

What can be done when the media are controlled by hostile, foreign, or business interests, or promote the interests of a certain ethnic group or region?

The discussion then moved away from the commercial to the role of religion and the media in supporting girls' education. May Rihani asked what can be done when religious leaders do not support girls' education, or when the media are controlled by hostile, foreign, or business interests, or promote the interests of a certain ethnic group or region. Religious leaders have, on the whole, played more positive than negative roles, Rugh said.

Bettina Moll said the emphasis should be on multisectoral support of education, which requires an inclusive strategy that takes into account all providers of education in the community, including public, private, and religious schools. In sub-Saharan Africa, for example, community schools are providing the full cycle of primary education as well as teaching religion. Moll postulated that ministries of education could facilitate and coordinate these various school systems. In one innovative partnership, the government of Burkina Faso finances construction of private school classrooms, because it can be more affordable as well as acceptable to educate children, in particular girls, in private schools.

Don Sillers asked what is meant by "support": was it the provision of products, services, or money? Are we talking about voluntary contributions, or support for higher taxes? In Sillers' view, expecting businesses to provide more than token contributions for basic education on a voluntary basis is unrealistic, and probably unhealthy. "Funding basic education is a fundamental responsibility of government that usually absorbs several percent of GDP. Governments simply need to face up to that responsibility." "Moreover, Tietjen added, if businesses begin directing investments in education, that undermines governments. She also warned that the private sector may later refuse to accept new taxes, "because we are already doing our part."

In some instances, Method suggested, a government "might not be worth talking to," e.g., where it prohibits private sector altogether, or where, as in Haiti, it has no meaningful role in schooling. USAID might, in fact, want to let market forces take over in collapsed states.

The discussion ended as it began, with participants asking not whether, but how, to get the private sector involved in educating girls.

6. Creating Girl-Friendly Schools while Respecting Conventional Practices: Does Innovation Increase the Potential for Local Resistance?

A focus on good practices and a "child-friendly" environment without special attention to girls' needs and underlying inequities could underestimate or gloss over differential treatment of girls and other minorities.

What makes a school girl-friendly? According to Janet Robb (Creative Associates International), to some people it means balanced girl-to-boy classroom ratios; gender-sensitive male and female teachers who use gender sensitive learning materials; and separate (and clean) toilets for boys and girls. However, some so-called girl-friendly practices can cause conflict and confusion. Educators seeking to improve educational opportunities for girls need to walk a fine line between introducing practices that attract and support girls without creating conflict with their families and communities. For example, co-educational groupings of children for small-group activities can conflict with cultures and traditions that segregate girls and boys in social settings; calling on girls to lead class activities might oppose a tradition for girls to be reserved and deferential; requiring both boys and girls to perform the same maintenance duties around the school when tradition dictates the types of duties for which each should be responsible; requiring extracurricular or physical education activities for both boys and girls when traditional clothing for girls often restricts their mobility; and allowing girls to return to school after giving birth can signal approval of student pregnancy.

Although meant to provoke positive changes for girls, Robb wondered if these practices ensure a girl-friendly environment. Do they engender support from or antagonize the parents and grandparents who are the "keepers" of the culture and traditions? At what point may girl-friendly practices threaten support for their schooling? What policy supports are needed to successfully introduce girl-friendly practices? Is there a hierarchy of simple-to-complex practices that can be used to introduce changes in behavior?

In the discussion, participants defined girl-friendly practices more broadly than Robb, as a subset of *child-friendly* practices—or good practices in general—and framed them in terms of human rights and good teaching practices.[5] Thus, "girl-friendly"

[5]Indeed, some participants saw the issue of cultural appropriateness as a canard, because, in their view, gender equity issues much more than cultural issues underpin many of the conventional practices that disadvantage girls. These people called for a discussion of how to address the differing treatments, expectations, and demands placed on boys and girls in the classroom.

schools provide quality education that benefits all children and respects their rights. At the same time, some participants warned, a focus on good practices and a "child-friendly" environment without special attention to girls' needs and underlying inequities could underestimate or gloss over differential treatment of girls and other minorities.

The group thought it important to note that some conventional practices may limit girls' learning opportunities, and these should not supersede what the group felt to be universal principles of child-friendly practices and human rights. The human rights approach calls for a closer look at schooling as a socializing process, to see how norms, values, expectations, and beliefs influence girls' experience in the classroom and beyond school. Across all societies, gender inequities—not just culture—underpin conventional practices that disadvantage girls. Moreover, the group concluded, these inequities were not just within the walls of classrooms, but beyond school borders, and these need to be included in the discussion as well. One such factor is that girls carry a heavier burden of household chores, and may go to school without sufficient sleep. For example, in Malawi, rural girls get on average four fewer hours of sleep than boys per day. Cataloging and calling attention to as many of these factors as possible can help parents, teachers, and community leaders identify what needs to be changed to ensure optimal learning for all children. In other words, some customs, such as expecting daughters to perform the majority of household chores, may have to be changed.

The discussion achieved a consensus on what some "universal" girl-friendly practices might be. For example, all girls should be treated fairly and allowed to participate equally. Teaching practices should treat all children with dignity. Teachers should not beat or humiliate students, or allow children to bully or taunt other children. This human rights approach aims to create an environment of respect, which supports the creation of good learning conditions. Few parents or teachers would dispute this, and none would say that they voluntarily discriminate against girls. However, teachers and parents may need to take a "reflective practitioner" approach to reexamine some of these customary practices and "mental templates" of how they view and set expectations for girls. Teachers need to learn to become aware of their classroom dynamics and to encourage girls to become equally involved in all classroom learning activities.

Participants then turned to whether USAID should promote the human rights of the girl-child, or, as one USAID mission stated, was this more an issue for UNICEF? Though the United States did not sign the International Convention on the Rights of the Child, it did sign the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, and thus has an interest in promoting children's rights as human beings. Human rights can be promoted through the education process.

On the other hand, the human rights approach raises red flags and ministries of education may not support it. Moreover, many of those sitting at the policy dialogue table may have lost their own rights and cannot understand children's rights. The development community must work to garner commitment to the principles without creating backlash or resistance.

Learning always involves transformation and change, and all development work is culturally intrusive, in a sense, because it brings change.

What happens when child-friendly practices such as interactive, hands-on, active methods of learning and instruction become "culturally intrusive"? In some instances, parents might withhold or withdraw their children from school, or they may remove their children from one type of school (e.g., French language, public, or government schools), and put them in another type of school (e.g., *madrasa* or religious schools). However, parents also tend to withdraw their children from school when they believe the education is of poor quality or their child receives unfair or harsh treatment, i.e., child-unfriendly practices. Other forms of resistance include parents attempting to enroll boys in girls' schools.

To tackle these problems, participants agreed on the need for more creativity and a refinement of the language used to talk about and envision change. For example, instead of the term *intrusive*, the issue of conflict can be addressed in terms of cultural transformation processes. Learning always involves transformation and change, and all development work is culturally intrusive, in a sense, because it brings change. The values that drive these transformations, however, may be conservative. For example, in Afghanistan, the Taliban is promoting a particular type of social transformation that has had harsh implications for those who support girls' education.

More creativity might also be applied to the search for solutions. For example, does every child need to be inside a classroom or a school building in order to become educated? Are there other ways to develop inclusive attitudes that will better serve children?

Governments and school systems may not have the financial or human resource capacities to deal with the special needs of all students. Thus, the discussion concluded with a prioritizing list of suggestions for what to focus limited resources on.

These included:

- Search for innovative ways to reach as many groups as possible, without overlooking groups such as ethnic and language minorities who, like girls, have special needs that must be addressed.
- Solve the problem of violence against girls (by teachers/boys).
- Ensure equitable access to and allocation of system-wide and classroom resources (e.g., textbook availability) for girls.
- Change family expectations for girls that require them to work longer hours, get less sleep, have less time to study and attend school, and therefore not performing as well as boys.

Beyond the school system, conventional practices that disadvantage girls are partly or inextricably embedded in the culture. These are more complex and more difficult to change, but nevertheless deserve attention, including:

- Cultural stereotypes that promote the idea that girls cannot or should not learn. Targeted approaches to address the gender inequity underlying these stereotypes have to be carefully considered.
- Girl and child-friendly schools are culturally transformative. However, focusing on girl-friendly teaching and classroom practices in the education sector alone underemphasizes the significance of conventions and conditions in other sectors that also disadvantage girls and constrain their educational opportunities.

Participants closed by listing questions they thought should be addressed at the symposium, including:

- How can other actors, leaders, and sectors be engaged to address these issues?
- What approaches have been effective in transforming conventional practices and beliefs that disadvantage girls and women?
- What have been the outcomes of donor programs that attempt to change conventions?
- What have been the outcomes of donor-funded programs to increase gender awareness in teacher training activities?
- How is cultural resistance to girl-friendly practices manifested?
- Why is there a focus on primary schooling, when conventional practices are also important at the secondary school level, where there are the greatest numbers of female dropouts?

7. Does Information Communication Technology Combat or Reinforce Inequities?

Chloe O'Gara, (Academy for Educational Development) began the discussion of the role of Information Communication Technology (ICT) in girls' education by refuting the cliché that the Internet is "the great equalizer." The new technology is reinforcing the status quo, with advantages accruing mainly to higher income, urban males, said O'Gara.

Another speaker expressed the concern that, in terms of development, the use of technology in the classroom is a luxury, especially with so many children not even attending first grade. However, the technology is here and expanding rapidly (aided by USAID and the World Bank). Thus, it will be important to overcome the gender bias in the access to this technology if girls are to be prepared to take advantage of future opportunities.

Participants spent the bulk of the remaining discussion time brainstorming possible approaches to encourage girls to embrace ICT. Lorie Brush (American Institutes for Research) suggested encouraging positive interactions between girls and the technology, and "turning them on to technology." Two methods might be summer computer camps and the use of role models. In one school, more girls joined the chess club when the playing-piece icons were changed into images of a popular doll. In the United States, efforts to encourage girls to take advantage of ICT appear to be bearing fruit.

Brush said that in her experience boys tend to use computers to play competitive games, whereas girls use them more for group activities and skill building. O'Gara, however, was not enthused, and lamented the fact that most girl-oriented games are about fashion and makeup. O'Gara said that just as in the medical fields, when doctors were overwhelmingly male, women's health issues were not addressed, so is the ICT field male dominated, and what is developed appeals mostly to men. Another participant added that increasing the numbers of women in the medical field produced a—probably related—concomitant fall in salaries.

A participant asked if the problem might be approached "from the e-commerce angle, since women make most household purchasing decisions and there are a lot more women entrepreneurs in e-commerce than in any other area." Another suggestion was to encourage parents and guidance counselors to steer girls toward courses in ICT. Rita Kirshstein (American Institutes for Research) wondered if there are any technology teacher development programs that focus on any gender issues. John Hatch (USAID) said that the National Science Foundation sponsored a series of grants on girls in math and science, but that out of eighteen grant applications only two were selected, because most proposals did not focus on girls' learning or promise practical steps to attract more girls into these subjects. Hatch suggested that there is a "need to build on the linkages already taking place to involve girls in math and sci-

ence." Just as it took a lot of bridge-building to get girls into math and science, "a bridge is needed to take girls in the technology direction."

Kirshstein related details from a program in Vermont (United States), where artists use ICT technology to critique other artists. The program has markedly increased student participation. She also summarized a program run by the Cisco Company that provided technology to high schools and trained high school students as network technicians. Though the students were not then obliged to work for Cisco, the company had recognized and acted on its need to invest in the development of a human resource base for its future growth.

Far from being "the great equalizer," the Internet is reinforcing the status quo, with advantages accruing mainly to higher income, urban males.

May Rihani concluded by suggesting that the discussion has provided the outlines of a paper that explored communication technology. The paper might explore some of the issues that surfaced in this discussion, such as how to encourage girls to enter nontraditional occupations and to interest them in math and science.

8. What is the Role of Boys in Girls' Education?

We want both females and males to achieve more equitable outcomes on what is valued by society. That includes helping males achieve in areas like nurturing skills where women traditionally excel.

David Sadker (American University) and Sue Klein (U.S. Department of Education) introduced the second session on emerging issues. Sadker said that one issue is whether the girls' education endeavor should be called *girls' education* or *gender equity,* and quoted Diane Prouty, who had said in an earlier session that gender equity reflects the idea that the education system's concern is for both boys and girls, acknowledging that sometimes it is boys who are disadvantaged, and suggesting that equity problems be looked at holistically. Gender equity means "a focus on girls, but never forgetting boys," Sadker said.

Sadker reminded participants that it was only in the late 1800s that U.S. schools opened to girls, though not for reasons of equity, but rather because state governments became convinced that educated girls would become "scientific homemakers and Christian mothers." Sadker said that it was even later that the belief that education can lead to social change developed, pointing out that only in the past twenty-five years have U.S. classrooms approached gender equity as a result of the world-wide civil rights movement. As a consequence of this approach, Sadker said, "we made the error in the United States of not looking at boys early or hard enough. We [now] need to deal with *two* genders."

Noting that there are active girls and quiet boys in most classrooms, Sadker said that a second emerging issue was whether educators should view equity problems through the lens of *learning styles* rather than gender, race, or culture. Klein extended this idea by conceding that women may be better at doing certain things than men. "We want both females and males to achieve more equitable outcomes on what is valued by society. That includes helping males achieve in areas like nurturing skills where women traditionally excel."

Klein raised the third emerging issue of how better partnerships could be created for both men and women to work together toward equity objectives. Peg Sutton—in support of both the term gender equity and the need to form partnerships—suggested that there are potential partnerships to be formed with activist women's groups, such as those that fought against South Africa's apartheid system. "These groups were gender inclusive and, by necessity, addressed issues related to both genders," Sutton said. Howard Williams said that nontraditional partners can help reinforce popular demand

for education for girls as well. Sadker said that traditionally, men join the movement by marrying into it or having—and thus learning to value—a daughter. One outgrowth of this phenomenon is "Dads & Daughters," which, according to the organization's Web page, "provides tools to strengthen our relationships with our daughters and transform the pervasive messages that value our daughters more for how they look than who they are" (www.dadsanddaughters.org).

Prouty then returned the discussion to the issue of *equity*, which she said is more problematic than gender. She cited as reflective of a dangerous mindset the cliché that "when you educate a woman you educate a nation," which she believes sends a poor message to boys. "We should instead send a message of shared obligations." Frank Method worried that with terms such as gender equity, equality, parity and fairness being bantered about, that the group was "not being very precise." Indeed, he noted, parity and fairness may not be the same at all! Method suggested that participants begin distinguishing between *opportunities* and *outcomes*. In Method's view, girls' education is a quantifiable goal, whereas gender equity is "a set of objectives and a plan to achieve them." This, is "much more fundamental and difficult than the delivery systems."

Mary Joy Pigozzi said that it might be a good idea to drop the terms altogether, and instead show how to go about things, such as "getting policy issues on the table without getting them shot down." She said that one of UNICEF's approaches is to start looking at the issue of "education for excluded children," rather than simply girl's education. Sadker agreed that this was a good strategy, but noted that while *access* remains crucial in some countries, when the main equity issue becomes *quality*, it is more difficult to tackle. "Some people ask, 'When 55 percent of college students are women, why is there a problem.'" The answer, Sadker said, is that there are academic "glass walls" that exclude women from the highly remunerative disciplines, and that women who make it into these disciplines are "channeled" into unremunerative specialties. Thus, he said, "access is not the finish line, but ... where we can begin to do some work."

Susie Clay said that USAID "avoids using the term gender when discussing girls' education, since the term polarizes people and since it also doesn't allow us to get at the specifics of pedagogy and practice." "The term *girls' education* is noncontroversial and, after all, who can argue with its benefits"? Another example she offered was that rather than calling it "'training in gender-sensitivity,' we talk about 'training in specific practices and techniques that increase girls' school enrollment, achievement, and completion.'" Sadker noted that even noncontroversial terms may carry subliminal or unintended connotations. For example,

Only in the past twenty-five years have U.S. classrooms approached gender equity as a result of the world-wide civil rights movement.

women who make overgeneralized criticisms of men are often labeled *male bashers;* yet, there is no equivalent term for men who carry out physical assaults against women. Similarly, *road rage* is not called *male road rage,* though men are responsible for 90 percent of such behavior. In the same way, Sadker suggested, the word *gender* suggests girls, just as the word *race* suggests blackness. The point is that the use of such labels "blinds us to the fact that stereotypes hurt us all."

Marcy Bernbaum asked whether all this theory has been translated into action in actual school systems. Sadker said that in the United States, models have been proposed and grassroots activities undertaken, but there has been no concerted national effort. Typical of these efforts were single-sex schools or classes and special math, science, and computer programs. Unfortunately, Sadker noted, the programs rarely drew in boys, especially minority boys.

Peg Sutton asked to what extent changes in awareness of the issue have been activated by nongovernmental organizations. Sadker answered that NGOs have successfully pushed for improved textbooks, but noted that while there is a new bias toward depicting girls in textbooks, "the content is the same." In one textbook study, there were indeed more depictions of girls than boys. However, out of thirteen girls depicted, eleven were shown as confused, failing, or otherwise as *not smart.* The question, Sadker said, is how can we engage all stakeholders to recognize this disparity?

In closing the discussion, participants agreed on the need to seek new ways to involve men and women together to bring about change, and to look at how change has already come about through other movements, e.g., land reform, human rights. Mona Habib gave an example from Egypt, where some communities agreed to found three girls' schools after they were presented with the rationale that education would make the girls more marriageable, and hence a greater community asset. This approach generated fervent community support for girls' education. Pigozzi mentioned another example of a girls' education project in Balochistan, where the project "went through the male power structure" to seek support for setting up girls' schools. "We have the experience [of working with nontraditional partners]," Pigozzi said, "but we don't often talk about it." Sadker suggested that participants also ask what the focus on girls has taught them about boys and what is the role of boys in girls' education. Pigozzi said that questions such as these will help us avoid "dichotomies" at the symposium and to move forward more easily.

Produced by the SAGE project, Academy for Educational Development.
Funded under the G/WID WIDTech Activity
with Development Alternatives, Inc.
USAID contract no. FAO-0100-Q-6006-0